

To: Examiner Cormier (Art Unit: 1711)

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Re: Application No. 10/535,247 (Attny. Docket No.: 2936-0241PUS1)

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Examiner Cormier:

The following comments have been provided for you consideration. Please consider whether the following arguments/proposed amendments to claim 1 would distinguish the claimed invention over the cited references. After the consideration, please kindly contact Applicants' representative, Maki Hatsumi.

Current Status of the Pending Claims

1. Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, and 16 have been rejected under Section 103 based on the combination of Ando's rinsing with addition of silver ions, Mueller's rinsing with addition of a treatment substance, Hashimoto's control of a rinsing process, etc.

2. In the previous Reply, Applicants argued that Hashimoto's "spin-dry rinse" does not produce (or generate) a flow of water, and in this respect, the reference differs from ringing in the present invention.

Applicants' Arguments/Comments

1. Hashimoto states, in col. 6, line 52, that "During the spin dry rinse mode, discharge valve is opened," and in Step 9 (spin dry rinse) in Figs. 4 and 5, the supplied water is discharged without being kept in the washing tub. Thus, no flow of water is ever generated.

2. In Step 10 "Spin dry," the supply valve is closed, and Hashimoto states, in col. 7, line 2 as follows: "In the following spin dry operation, detergent-laden water is evacuated from

the laundry and tub by rotating the tub at high speed. This efficiently removes the detergent from the laundry.” This statement clearly indicates that no flow of water is generated in the “Spin dry step.”

3. The Examiner asserts that claim 1 simply mentions a “swirl period” and does not expressly mention a “flow of water.” However, Applicants believe that, from other part of claim 3, for example the statement to the effect that the water flow controlling portion controls the “swirl period,” it is clear that there is a flow of water.

4. If further clarification is necessary, Applicants will consider amending claim 1 to include:

(a) The feature(s) recited in claim 7 or 18; or

(b) The following features,

first and second powerful swirl periods, during which a powerful flow of water is generated, and a mild swirl period, during which a mild flow of water is generated, or

first and second powerful swirl periods and a still period, during which no flow of water is generated.

5. Claim 18 has been rejected under Section 103 based on, among others, the McAllister reference.

Applicant submit, however, that McAllister merely discloses the method for time-varying the agitator oscillation in an automatic washer and does not disclose or suggest the foregoing distinctive feature of the present invention.